**AUCHENHARVIE ACADEMY**

**Head Teacher: Calum Johnston BED (Hons)**

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**Date: 5th August 2021**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I sincerely hope that this communication finds you, and your family, safe and healthy and indeed looking forward to returning to school in just over two weeks’ time. The school term starts at 0845am on Wednesday 18th August 2021.

I have been waiting on updated guidance from the Scottish Government prior to communicating with our school community and am now in a position to do so. When I receive further guidance on arrangements for the SQA examination diet for May 2022 I will of course communicate with you all again.

As the head teacher of your child’s chosen school I am very keen to move forwards from the educational impact of COVID-19. We have invested lots of resource into identifying the educational impact of the pandemic on individual pupils’ literacy, numeracy and wellbeing and will work tirelessly to improve any gaps identified. I am however keen that, whilst recognising what has happened, that we look and move forwards, that we focus on what can be achieved rather than what has been lost and I hope that you will work alongside my staff and I in doing so.

***As we move into the new session we will continue to strive every day to fulfil our school vision of providing excellence and equity for all pupils whilst maximising their potential and supporting them, when appropriate, into a positive post-school destination. We will continue with our relentless focus on wellbeing and inclusion and strive to do the best we can for all pupils and their families.***

A copy of our School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2021/22, which expands on our key priorities for this year, and how we will deliver them, will be available on our school website from early September when it has been through the final stage of scrutiny/consultation.

**School Uniform /PE Kit.**

I am very keen that the highest standards of school uniform are adhered to upon our return to school. Last session, due to restrictions on Physical Education changing provision I had no option other than to relax rules on school uniform but am very keen to reinstate these standards in the new session.

From our return in August we will have full use of PE changing facilities with no issues on social distancing etc. The only restriction that will continue in PE will be a ban on aerosol deodorants. These should not be used under any circumstances although the roll-on alternative is perfectly acceptable. Having full use of PE changing room’s means that we no longer need to relax school uniform rules. Pupils are therefore expected to wear white shirt, school tie (available daily from school reception 10am-2pm Mon- Thu), black trousers/skirt and dark footwear. Please note that jeans, leggings, shorts and tracksuit bottoms are not acceptable as school uniform. Parents/carers who require financial support with school uniform can find the appropriate supports on the NAC website. Equally, we have our own in school NA PLUS service details of which are available by contacting school directly.

In July we communicated with all parents about the changes to our school PE kit. This will become mandatory from August 2022 but we hope to make significant improvements to PE kit standards in the coming session.

**General COVID-19 guidance.**

A full copy of our updated whole school COVID risk assessment will be available on our school website from wb 16th August. This will not be significantly different to the version used prior to the summer break and all pupils will be made aware of our COVID rules through virtual assemblies / pupil gatherings held during the first two days back to school. In summary, we will continue to operate one way systems in our corridors and stairwells, and insist that hands and equipment are sanitised at the end of each lesson. Face coverings will be mandatory for all pupils whilst they are indoors in all areas of the school with the exception of when they are eating in the school canteen. Only pupils with medical exemption (as recorded in their school notes) will be exempt from wearing face coverings and they must carry an exemption pass which can be collected from the main school office.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) kits will be available to all pupils in school and we would encourage all pupils to take up this important mitigation. Pupils in the new S1 will be invited to attend school on Tuesday 10th August to collect test kits and all other pupils can collect these between 10am – 2pm on either Wednesday 11th or Thursday 12th August. Any pupil who cannot make these times are welcome to collect test kits upon their return to school the following week. ***Please note that LFD kits can only be issued to pupils when consent forms have been signed accordingly. Pupils under 16 years of age must have their consent forms signed by an adult and pupils who have previously returned a consent form to Auchenharvie are not required to repeat this process. A blank copy of the consent form is attached to this communication and copies are also available on our website. Paper copies will be available in school if required on each day and copies returned electronically are also sufficient for consent.***

**Extra-curricular activities.**

I am delighted to announce that with immediate effect upon our return to school that all extra-curricular activities are available to resume. It may take a couple of weeks to get clubs up and running fully but I look forward to the pre COVID extensive range of activities offered returning and I hope you will encourage pupils to make full use of these at lunchtimes and after school.

**Arrangements for New S1 pupils on first day back.**

We are excited to welcome our new S1 pupils to Auchenharvie on the 18th August. New S1 pupils should arrive in school from 8.30am and will be directed to various classrooms at the start of the day where they will be provided with important information (COVID and non COVID) from key transition staff. Pupils will be allocated to their classes and issued with new timetables before getting underway with their learning at the start of period 2 (9.45am). Pupils will also be shown how to operate canteen facilities to pre-order and pay for lunch.

As ever we ask that S1 pupils remain in the school grounds at lunchtime for the first 4 weeks although it is not always easy, given the size of the school campus, to enforce this. We therefore ask for your support in encouraging all pupils to remain in the school grounds at this time. It is mandatory that all pupils S1-6 stay in the school grounds at morning interval.

**Arrangements for S2/3/4/5/6 pupils on the first day back.**

All pupils in S2-6 will be able to find their new registration classes through information displays in canteens and the main school office. Time will be taken during period 1 to issue new timetables and to sort out any issues which may arise. Pupils in S2/6 will resume normal learning from 9.20am on the first day.

***Members of staff will be on hand in the playground and around the school to help all pupils with any questions they might have about their return to school.***

**S4/5/6 SQA and Options.**

As you know, all S4/5/6 pupils will receive their SQA results certificates on Tuesday 10th August and I am sure you will join me in wishing them all the very best of luck. I am delighted to inform you that I have had no contact from the SQA over the summer break seeking to clarify or amend any of our provisional grades and therefore I fully expect all pupils to have their provisional grades (as shared on the final week of last session) made official next week.

As has been intimated to all pupils and parents/carers during the summer break, senior staff will be on hand and available on 11th and 12th August to support pupils with option changes and potential SQA appeals. We are trying to undertake each of these conversations whether face-to-face or by telephone on the 11th August as the availability of some staff has been reduced on 12th August. We will ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to discuss these matters should the 11th not suit on an individual basis, please contact school directly where this is the case. Equally, there will be opportunities for pupils to discuss these matters on the first day back.

**Support re school rules.**

Finally, it became very clear to me when we returned from the period of remote learning in March 2021 that a number of key factors had the potential to disrupt pupils learning and my staff and I will have a strong and relentless focus on ensuring that this is not the case in the coming session.

Firstly, it was very noticeable that many young people had become obsessed with using their mobile phones, often in class and to the detriment of their learning, and were very uncomfortable at being asked not to use them for a sustained period of time. I am therefore asking for your full support in ensuring that pupils understand that mobile phones should not be used at any time in class unless authorised by the teacher for the purposes of their learning. Pupils caught using phones (or any other devices including ear buds etc) in class will have these confiscated and returned at the end of the day from the main school office where they will be kept securely. Pupils who persistently break this rule will be asked not to bring any devices to school and again I would really appreciate your support with this potential issue.

Also, the number of pupils asking out of class to go to the toilet was, in my opinion excessive, and another potential barrier to learning given the time wasted each period. While it is a human right to use the toilet, and not therefore something that can be removed, I would ask you all to support us in speaking with pupils about using the school toilets at appropriate times i.e.) before school, at interval and lunchtime to minimise the impact on their learning.

Clearly, some pupils will have medical conditions (known to us) which do not facilitate this arrangement but your support in working with us in this seemingly small matter is greatly appreciated.

I look forward to working with you all in the coming session as we work together to provide the best learning environment for your child. I hope that as we move forward from COVID that we can return to pre pandemic levels of in school parental engagement, involvement and consultation including face-to face parent’s evenings. As ever if you have any questions about any aspect of this communication please contact me directly on the details provided above.

Yours sincerely,



Calum Johnston

Head Teacher

Auchenharvie Academy